

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED 02-277

April 10, 2003
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Michael Copps, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington D.C. 20554
by U.S. Mail

Confirmed

APR 17 2003

Distribution Center

re: relaxation of newspaper-broadcast cross ownership rules

Dear Commissioner Copps:

I oppose the proposed deregulation of newspaper-broadcast cross ownership rules.

Enclosed is a copy of my July 20, 1999 letter to my then-congressman opposing deregulation of radio ownership (I have since moved to the address above). Similar reasoning applies to the issue of cross-media ownership.

The effect of ownership concentration has become clearer in the last four years, an effect warned against nearly 200 years ago:

"A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps, both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." James Madison

The recent public debate on war re-makes this point: the full statement of anti-war position occurred only on the internet and in some foreign print media, but not in the mainstream U.S. print or visual media. We now know that one FCC-creation, Clear Channel, consciously curtailed the public debate. This is the "farce or tragedy" of which James Madison warns.

Also enclosed is a letter-to-the-editor which I wrote, explaining the consequences of the lack of easily accessible information to the electorate.

In the end, your position on this issue is a matter of your values and character. I point you to the values and character of Madison, Jefferson and Washington.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Shoen

cc: Senator John McCain

July 20, 1999
8202 N.W. 16th. Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98665 USA
360-574-3673

U.S. Senator Slade Gorton
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Federal Building
500 W. 12th. St., Room 130
Vancouver, WA 98660

enclosure

Dear Senator Gorton:

I am a registered voter, taxpayer, business owner and father of three teenagers in Clark County, Washington.

I am writing to express my opposition to that portion of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 which allows single ownership of as many as eight radio stations in one market.

In 1997 and 1998 I investigated the purchase of an F.M. radio station in the urban West Coast markets. I attended three major industry conventions and subscribed to and read a variety of industry publications. I had the assistance of an individual who had worked in the business for 50 years.

What I learned includes: four companies own 90% of the F.M. coverage for urban markets over 500,000 listeners. Please read this sentence again to be certain that you understand. To put it simply, Ted Turner and three of his peers control what you, I, our children and our neighbors' children listen to, throughout the entire United States.

Music is selected through demographic test listening by a few music survey companies who then sell their survey results to the major players or who are in fact owned by the majors. This insures that we get the same bland, from-the-pocketbook-not-from-the-heart, commercially-tested "product" over and over again. This includes advertising and news.

Because of economies of scale and increased competition brought about by this ownership deregulation, F.M. station prices have tripled, quadrupled and beyond. The company I represented did not purchase a station because prices were so high that a reasonable economic return was unlikely for a single-station owner.

The result is a cultural melting pot which discourages diversity and filters creativity. Programming is determined by a few mega-owners and, ultimately, by large-market demographic testing.

Specifically, here are four artists whom you, I and our children will never hear on the radio:

Josephine Baker
Fred McDowell
John Fahey
Lydia Mendoza

Ask a musicologist or a music historian and I think you will find that these were some of the more significant popular musicians of this century -- whose work has been collected by the Library of Congress and appreciated by collectors throughout the world. Our nation will never hear their music on radio.

If we presume that radio does not have the role of educating or improving the populace, then this is acceptable. The downside is that our music culture is being reduced to its lowest common denominator by centralized control. Radio audience are excluded from the broad spectrum of beautiful music and overpowered by a narrow band of "market-approved" music. I suppose this is part of "the dumbing down" of America.

I do not intend to impose my musical tastes or the tastes of the the Library of Congress on others, but, conversely neither myself, the curators of the Library of Congress, nor most Americans want the market-tested, lowest-common-denominator tastes of four large corporations imposed on them.

Because of this, grass-roots internet radio is burgeoning.

But just because some listeners are creating an alternate medium for diversity and quality, does not mean that diversity and quality should continue to be denied most Americans on F.M. radio.

I believe that time is showing and will show that the deregulation of local radio ownership is having a significant adverse effect on the diversity, beauty and quality of our culture.

This will ultimately have a negative effect on our values. It is the values of a society, not its physical resources, which give it strength. Martin Luther King said that, "America is an idea." The question is -- what idea?

The idea which triumphed was mega-corporation profit. The idea discarded was that the average citizen should have easy access to a broad spectrum of beauty and creativity.

Which is the better idea?

Sincerely,



Michael L. Shoen

Letters

Secrecy at the service of power

Thank you for publishing the commentary by Charles N. Davis, as well as a much earlier commentary by Tom Jenney on the principles of Barry Goldwater.

For 18 years I have had on my bulletin board this statement by James Madison: "The loss of liberty at home is to be charged to the provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad."

Davis does not state the problem broadly enough. The problem is: man wants to naturally aggregate power; the founding fathers tried to prevent accumulation of power through the separation of powers and checks and balances; John Adams warned that the citizenry would not have the intelligence to direct the republic; on Nov. 22, 1963 the intelligence agencies achieved extraordinary success in bending the direction of the country without detection; this emboldened these agencies and the power of the elite to aggressively foreign policy in secret, avoiding the scrutiny of both Congress and the electorate; this coincided with four other events: the degradation of public education via the NEA; the triumph of consumerism and the public's distraction by the trivia of consumption; the centralization of the media and their replace-

ment of news with entertainment, all culminating in the public's ensuing lack of knowledge of their loss of control of the republic. George W. Bush and his advisors are simply the end result of this progression of events.

The seminal book on the ascendancy of the secret government is Victor Marchetti's "The CIA and the Cult of Secrecy." The primer on media is Mander's "Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television." There are, of course, many more, but who reads nowadays?

Michael L. Shoen
Paradise Valley

Easter was not created for bunny rabbits

With Easter only weeks away, you are off to the mall with your eight-year-old and you both fall in love with that cute little rabbit in the pet store.

Love at first site! But wait, don't be fooled by the pretty package. Bunnies are cute, cuddly, silky and soft, especially when they are babies.

In a few months these adorable bunnies will start scratching, spraying urine, biting and destroying your house. Anything made of wood will be reduced to sawdust within hours.

Rabbits are one of the most misunderstood animals in the universe. Rabbits require hours of attention and love;

enclosure

it a letter

ailed to Douglas
Town of Paradise
771, 11000 N. Scottsdale
AZ 85254; faxed to
or e-mailed to
paol.com.



April 9, 2003

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FCC - MAILROOM

10, April 2003

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Distribution Center

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Dear Mr. Lopez, you have my support in opposition to media giants obtaining complete control over what I know and think. On PBS series now with Bill Moyers there was a segment on this very issue facing Americans. The media giants say that they need to have the privilege of earning more to generate more profits to pay for the 'good programming' given to the public for free viz abc, nbc and cbs.

This is patently false, profits are not the issue their profits through other media are more than sufficient to pay for good programs its their greed and vile desire to control what people know and think is their motivation to own more media outlets magazines, newspapers, television channels.

Imagine the results of the success of deregulation. The government party who pays sufficiently gets more air time more public influence = more control. It is well known that when a lobby is let in the door and cordoned i.e. empowered they do not leave and must be appeased because they can make or break a political career, public policy etc.

It's almost like there is a silent coup d'etat happening. all this government centralization, corporate consolidation, tax cuts for the rich corporate CEOs, I don't like it and I will not accept it this media issue is in my mind only one facet of a growing problem. To hell with the plutocrats!

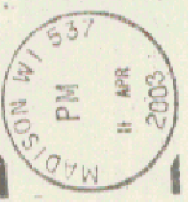
I vote NO to media giants obtaining deregulation privileges.

Thank you Mr. Lopez, for your time and attention to my thoughts and feelings on this matter.

Very Sincerely,

Raleigh Decord 280445
P.O. Box 9900 / WSP
Dorchester, Wisconsin
53805

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APR 16 2003
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Mr. Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

